

# Healthy and Sustainable Hospital Food

## Food Procurement at UC Davis Health

In the past few years, the number of small farms in six counties in Sacramento declined. This trend is likely to be further impacted due to the effects of COVID-19 on the agricultural industry. However, the USDA cites small farms as 'vital to our nation's health and economy' and responsible for protecting and enhancing our natural resources and environment.

UC Davis Health has the second largest production kitchen in the state's capital, serving 2.4 million meals per year. While Sacramento is hailed as the "Farm-to-Fork" capital, pursuing a "Farm-to-Hospital" model requires addressing the barriers to building a food system that sustainably supports the health of people, communities, and our environment.



## Expanding Opportunities in Hospital Food Service for Small and Mid-Scale California Specialty Crop Growers

A new \$450,000 project will expand opportunities for partnership with UC Davis Health for small and mid-scale growers who focus on California specialty crops (i.e. fruits, vegetables, and nuts).



## Project Goals

The project will address barriers and enhance pathways for UC Davis Health's kitchen to source healthy and regional produce. We aim to:

- Increase purchase of fresh California specialty crops, and move away from out of state or international purchasing
- Pilot a communication process for sharing UC Davis Health crop purchasing projections with regional producers, minimizing market uncertainty and risk for farmers by forecasting sales
- Provide technical assistance for growers and five food hubs to sell to institutional buyers
- Develop skills for hospital cooks, dietitians, and managers
- Educate patients and cafeteria customers with recipe cards

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### Project Partners

- [UC Davis Health Executive Chef, Santana Diaz](#)
- [UC Davis Health Food and Nutrition Services Department](#)
- [UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program \(SAREP\)](#)
- [Center for Good Food Purchasing](#)
- [Community Alliance with Family Farmers](#)
- [Health Care Without Harm](#)

Becoming a Farm-to-Fork Hospital



UC Davis Health, Executive Chef Santana Diaz and the Food and Nutrition Services team have put a focus on local sourcing and sustainability measures. UC Davis Health continues to exceed the [UC Office of the President sustainability goal](#) to procure 20 percent sustainable food products.

The efforts by our hospital and Chef Diaz have been recognized most recently by:

- **The James Beard Foundation:** The Medical Center became the first hospital in the nation and the first Sacramento venue to earn designation as a James Beard Foundation “Smart Catch Leader” for its efforts to serve seafood that has been fished or farmed in environmentally responsible ways.
- **Practice Greenhealth:** Designated within the "top 10" Food Circle awardees by Practice Greenhealth in 2020, for its noteworthy programming in meat reduction, procurement of better meat, local and sustainable sourcing, improving access to tap water and healthy beverages, supporting healthy food access and preventing food waste.
- **Health Care Without Harm:** Since joining Health Care Without Harm’s Cool Food Pledge program, Food and Nutrition Services has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by more than 7% through better food procurement practices.